

Cambridge Elements

Elements in Quantitative and Computational Methods for the
Social Sciences

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ADAPTIVE INVENTORIES

A Practical Guide for Applied Researchers

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Adaptive Inventories

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Abstract: The goal of this Element is to provide a detailed introduction to adaptive inventories, an approach to making surveys adjust to respondents' answers dynamically. This method can help survey researchers measure important latent traits or attitudes accurately while minimizing the number of questions respondents must answer. The Element provides both a theoretical overview of the method and a suite of tools and tricks for integrating it into the normal survey process. It also provides practical advice and direction on how to calibrate, evaluate, and field adaptive batteries using example batteries that measure a variety of latent traits of interest to survey researchers across the social sciences.

Keywords: survey methods, computerized adaptive testing, latent variable, active learning, measurement

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